

The Naming



by Jane Malone

THE NAMING

-a play in two acts

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SYNOPSIS

A Catholic maternal Grandfather, Protestant paternal Grandmother, atheist father, agnostic mother, Jewish godfather, Buddhist godmother and as yet religiously non-aligned baby gather together in a recently renovated beach house for the surprise 'Naming' of the aforementioned hitherto religiously non-aligned.

SETTING

Sorrento, a popular weekend destination outside of Melbourne.

STAGE

A chic living room.

Stairs lead to mezzanine area and doors to bedrooms.

TIME

Last weekend.

CHARACTERS

Sarah- early 30s, mother.

Adam- early 30s, father.

Joel- Adam's friend.

Mags- Sarah's friend.

Dave- Sarah's father.

Trish- Sarah's mother.

Evelyn- Adam's mother.

Paul- early 30s, Baptist minister.

Peter- Catholic priest, 80+

ACT ONE

SARAH and MAGS are talking on the couch. ADAM and JOEL enter with firewood.

JOEL: It's alright ladies don't get up.

MAGS: Why would we? Nothing I like more than seeing a man at work.

JOEL: Now now. Equal opportunity. The glass ceiling starts at the coalface.

SARAH: That'd make for a pretty grubby glass ceiling.

MAGS: Wake up Joel, this is the post feminist age.

JOEL: That's a shame, I was hoping we could burn your bra as kindling.

ADAM: So where was the action yesterday Mags?

MAGS: Lunch at the cutest little bistro on Bourke Street. I had the quaintest little grain fed pork and fennel tortellini with the sweetest over ripened apple core sauce!

SARAH: Tortellini Thesaurus. I wish I was still doing lunch in cutest little bistros.

JOEL: Where else are you frequenting these days Mags?

MAGS: I frequent the places that are frequented most frequently.

SARAH: She's on the charity circuit.

JOEL: I would have thought the constant exposure to the poverty cycle would wreck havoc with your vertigo.

MAGS: No one makes the room spin more than you Joel. I had a celeb wedding last weekend. Sooo tacky. The gift registry was at Liberty Travel.

ADAM: Liberty Travel?

MAGS: Yeah, so instead of a wedding present, you donate to the honeymoon! They start off with tickets

to Maui, and the more that people put in, the more they upgrade their destination. Maui, Milan, the Maldives ...

JOEL: I love a registry. I always give number 16. After the age I first got laid. No matter what it costs I give number 16. Makes me feel good knowing my first sexual experience will be forever connected with the groom's last.

ADAM: So did you donate?

MAGS: They're getting married. They can rot in Maui.

JOEL: Your Frog Prince'll come along soon.

MAGS: I'm seeing someone anyway.

JOEL: Is that so? Well who is he, what does he do?

MAGS: He's Max, he's a banker.

JOEL: And?

MAGS: That's all.

JOEL: You can do better than that.

MAGS: He's older, smarter and funnier than you.

JOEL: But is he better in bed?

MAGS: If you were at all memorable, I'd be able to compare.

ADAM: Right... We need you on the same team.

MAGS/JOEL: Why?

SARAH: Because tomorrow morning, we're having Adam's Naming.

JOEL: He already has a name.

SARAH: Nevertheless, we're naming him, in a font, with oils and the dearest little outfit.

JOEL: That sort of naming.

ADAM: It's no big deal. Sarah wants to put his name down with the Jesuits.

MAGS: So?

SARAH: Deadline's Monday.

MAGS: So?

ADAM: They won't put him on the waiting list til he's baptised a Catholic.

MAGS: You can't send him to a school run by Catholics.

SARAH: It's close, it's progressive.

JOEL: In that it's run by men who think it's completely normal to go to football games wearing dresses.

MAGS: Yes that's their greatest crime.

ADAM: Nothing's decided. It's just so we can put his name down. We want you to be the Godparents.

JOEL: I'm Jewish.

MAGS: And I'm Buddhist. Or trying to be. I'd feel closer to Zen if I wasn't so hungover.

ADAM: Doesn't matter, it's just a formality.

JOEL: We're not going to a church are we? You saw what all that incense did to my asthma at the wedding.

SARAH: Too short notice to get a church. We're having it here. Adam hired a font.

ADAM: Da da...
Adam shows them the font, which is a small elevated bath on a stand.

JOEL: Looks like a Foot Spa. Does it do bubbles?

ADAM: No it does babies.

MAGS: Who's doing the dunking?

SARAH: The same priest that did the wedding.

MAGS: The one that organised the drinking games at the reception?!

SARAH: Adam's hidden all the port.

ADAM: And we're having a Minister again as well.

SARAH: To soften the blow for Adam's mum.

MAGS: Tell me it's not the happy clappy from the wedding?

ADAM: He refused to come. Said his liver wasn't up to another night with the priest. But you remember Paul Clayton from College? He's a Minister now, so he's doing the honours.

JOEL: Paul Clayton. How memorable was he Mags??

MAGS: What is the whole Catholic and Protestant thing anyway?

SARAH: Tribalism.

MAGS: Sounds like something from 'Survivor'.

ADAM: Hangover from the fifties. Protestants are in denial about Catholics being Christians, which they are, and Catholics think there is only one true church, which there isn't. And neither feel the need to get along in this life, as neither feel they'd have to get along in the 'afterlife', as neither think the others will be there.

MAGS: Fucking religion. 'God. The tribe has spoken.'

TRISH and DAVE enter.

TRISH: Hello, hello!

DAVE: Hey there!

TRISH: We thought we'd save you getting up by coming round the back. Darlings. *(She kisses Sarah and Adam)* Where's my grandson?
Trish goes to grandchild and cooes into the pram.

DAVE: Sarah, Adam.

ADAM: Hey Dave.

DAVE: Joel.

JOEL: Dr Walsh.

DAVE: Look at that, right on time. Not like the old days, we were always running late, now we're always on time!

TRISH: Trouble is, all our friends are now early, so even though we're on time, we're still late!

DAVE: And there's Mags! Hello Hello!

MAGS: Dave.

DAVE: That your Porsche out there Joel? Wouldn't have taken you long from town in that. When'd ya get that?

JOEL: Just last week. New job.

TRISH: Remind me what you do again?

SARAH: 'Change Management'.

JOEL: Now now... I help people work out who moved their cheese. So much lost cheese with Nasdac n'all. We help identify the key movers.

SARAH: Yes you help people find their cheese so they've something to nibble on as they drink themselves into a stupor whilst contemplating the default fees on their mortgage. He fires people.

DAVE: Must be paying you quite well for that eh, what are they giving you?

JOEL: O big bucks Dr Walsh.

ADAM: Joel's got a wardrobe assistant.

MAGS: They wouldn't take him on unless he got one

JOEL: *(He spins)* What do you think?

DAVE: I'd rather watch Madeline do that! You got one of those Mags?!

MAGS: I should hope I wouldn't need one.

DAVE: And ain't that the truth! What about you then Mags, must be close to Partner? I'm wondering, do you do sexual harassment, cause I've got a writ, no one's harassing me!

ADAM: Drink Dave? Trish?

JOEL: I wouldn't mind another before Evelyn arrives

DAVE: Is Evelyn coming?! Wish you'd told me. I would've packed my earplugs!

TRISH: I bought a little present for Adam, and your wedding cake for afterwards, as per tradition

SARAH: You didn't have to do that.

TRISH: It's just something small.

Buzzer. Buzzer Buzzer.

ADAM: That'll be Mum.

JOEL: I'll go bar.

ADAM opens door. EVELYN enters.

EVELYN: Your buzzer's faulty. I could've frozen out there. They're predicting the coldest weekend since the fifties. A decade to which I can attest as being terminally frigid. What a drive. I wish you'd warned me. It was pure chance I took Volvo.

JOEL: Yes, nothing like a Volvo for country roads...

EVELYN: Why is it that I can get Radio National but no signal for my mobile? I specifically brought a phone in case I broke down while driving in the country, and as soon as I hit the country, the signal breaks down.

SARAH: Well you're here safely now...

EVELYN: What if I'd had an accident or broken down out here?

JOEL: My guess' people'd be more scared of you than you are of them.

EVELYN: Pardon? It's not as small as I expected. When does the painting start?

TRISH: They've finished Evelyn.

EVELYN: It'll look so much better once it's painted. And a Southerly aspect. Delightful. So this is what he looks like.

TRISH: Isn't he beautiful. Have you not seen much of him Evelyn?

EVELYN: It's a bit difficult when he's in care all day.
And then whisked out here on the weekends. I've
barely set eyes on him.

SARAH: That's not quite true.

ADAM: Mum's been having us over for dinner once a
week.

DAVE: You didn't tell us you were doing that. We
should be doing that too.

SARAH: I know you're both busy.

DAVE: Trish's not busy. We'll get you over next week.

SARAH: Ahh... Would you like a drink Evelyn, or freshen
up?

EVELYN: Both. And Adam can bring my things in from the
car.

EVELYN goes upstairs. ADAM exits front door.

DAVE: Well I wish you could do some change consulting
on her! Fire 'er from the family? Hey? What d'ya
reckon Joel?

SARAH: She's still getting over Jack's death. It's
only been a year.

DAVE: Hormones, that's what she needs. I'll get her
a patch. And Prozac. That's what I give to all my
patients over a hundred and six. Prozac and a patch.

ADAM enters, struggling under weight of two bags.

ADAM: Looks like Mum's staying for a month. Where do
you want her?

SARAH: What about the West Wing?

JOEL: It wouldn't have her. You know how they all
feel about Republicans.

EVELYN re enters.

EVELYN: Who's a Republican?

JOEL: Publican. I am. Beverage?

EVELYN: Present for Adam.

SARAH: Thank you Evelyn.

Buzzer.

EVELYN: Who else are you expecting?

PAUL enters.

PAUL: Hello! Hope I'm not late! Almost ran over a fox. Think I might have taught him a road rule or two!

ADAM: Thanks for coming. Mum you remember Paul Clayton.

EVELYN: Of course.

PAUL: Hello Mrs Horton-Dorgan, so wonderful to see you!

EVELYN: Mmmm...

ADAM: And these are Sarah's parents, Dr and Mrs Walsh, and you know Mags, and Joel.

MAGS: Hey, yes! It's been too long.

PAUL: Yes, well you know the saying, a year is a long time in politics!! *He laughs*

JOEL: Is that what they say?

SARAH: What can I get you to drink Paul? Beer, Mag's having a scotch...

PAUL: Just a soda for me thanks Sarah. There now. Well isn't it a cold snap we're having.

DAVE: Would freeze the balls off a brass monkey.

PAUL: That it would Dr W, that it would.

DAVE: No need to call me doctor.

PAUL: OK W. I love the seasons though. Makes you feel so alive.

TRISH: Is it raining out there Paul?

PAUL: Just lightly at the moment, but they're expecting a real storm to come through, a real storm.